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CHAPTER XXX

Reading Affects in Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep*

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'I was neat, clean, shaved and sober, and I didn't care who knew it. I was everything the well-dressed private detective ought to be'.[1] Thus, begins Philip Marlowe's first book-length investigation in Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* (1939). The book's plot formulates a case of blackmail that changes into one of a sleazy porn business and then to multiple murders revolving around a missing man until all of these crimes are resolved in the end. The fast-paced events place Marlowe in life-threatening situations, thereby creating suspense as the dominant narrative interest. Dennis Porter characterizes detective narratives such as this as 'machine[s] for producing thrills', thanks to the careful calculation of their effects on readers.[2] Readers go through states of curiosity, anxiety, and fear, until they reach a climax with a stunning twist. Porter depicts readers as pleasure-seekers who purposefully read to *feel* something. By immersing themselves in the recounted events, they become emotionally invested. They want to be moved so that they can experience the effects in their bodies. Emotions cause physiological changes: for example, curiosity sharpens readers' senses, whereas suspense makes their palms sweat. Reading detective fiction is comparable to a roller-coaster ride, in which readers start from a position of safety, go through ups and downs, finally to be returned back to safety. According to Porter, readers crave the repetition of this experience.[3] Martin Priestman claims that what strengthens such emotional reading is the genre's rejection of in-depth and symbolic explanations of its actions and any further interpretation of its themes than the detective's.[4]

In spite of the current scholarly interest in literature and the emotions, research has been content to repeat the view that stock genres evoke stock emotions.[5] It is useful to contrast this assertion with the ending of *The Big Sleep*. Although at first Marlowe brags about being 'everything' an investigator ought to be, the case closes on an altogether different note: 'I stopped at a bar and had a couple of double Scotches. They didn't do me any good. All they did was make me think of Silver-Wig, and I never saw her again'.[6] The investigation has changed the detective: brashness has turned into regret and resignation. Marlowe's change of mood invites readers to notice that while they are immersed in the suspenseful emotions the text evokes, they simultaneously process characters' feelings that the text depicts. Consequently, in order to work out the nature and significance Marlowe's change of mood, they are invited to decipher the emotional process behind it. In this chapter, I argue that the significance of emotions for reading detective fiction does not stop at bodily reactions and stock emotions. Further, I claim that paying attention to emotions contests the view of the detective's solution as an authoritative conclusion to the crime case.

In her impressive book *Deeper than Reason*, Jenefer Robinson explains that subjects respond automatically to events in their (internal or external) environment through affective appraisals that trigger physiological changes. They register these changes in their bodies, readying themselves to respond in an appropriate way. An emotional response thus begins in a non-cognitive affective appraisal, but it is invariably followed by cognitive monitoring and evaluation that enables subjects to review the nature, suitability, and significance of their emotions.[7] Hence, emotions occur neither in the mind nor the body, explains Robinson, but in a processual network that cannot be understood solely in terms of its corporeal or cognitive component parts. Instead, both parts need to be considered.[8] Further, given that pre-cognitive affective appraisals do not discriminate between real and imagined scenarios, we respond automatically to fictive situations, as we would to real ones. It is cognitive monitoring that reminds us to adjust our reactions to the reading situation.[9]

Robinson emphasizes that many works of literature need to be experienced emotionally if we are to understand them properly. It is through emotional responses that readers gather important information about characters and plot. Experiencing literature helps us to 'become more perceptive and astute in our understanding of human motivation, human frailty, and human achievement'.[10] What makes emotions central in *The Big Sleep* is that from the start there is a disjunction between Marlowe's official assignment and the one he *feels* he has been asked to investigate. He begins to pursue a self-appointed agenda that deepens this rift, eventually inviting readers to question his motives and understanding of the case. Thus, readers need to reflect carefully on the novel's emotional realm. I examine the emotional responses *The Big Sleep* evokes from three different viewpoints: firstly, that of the investigation, Marlowe's function as a narrator, and the overall emotional experience of reading this novel. As a detective, Marlowe must form a sense of the relationships between the causes and consequences of the crime case. This task requires a lot of gap-filling activities. Significantly, they draw not only on cognitive but also on emotional responses, if only because a detective needs to understand the emotional roots of the crime in order to solve it. In fact, he treats the suspects' emotions as clues while purposefully provoking them to react emotionally. But the case influences his emotions, too, guiding his actions and choices., I then consider Marlowe as a narrator who actively manipulates the emotional reactions of his narrative audience and the ends to which he does so. Finally, I ponder the whole reading experience, showing that the reader's emotional responses endow *The Big Sleep* with a depth and mobility of meaning amounting to the kind of polysemy that some scholars hold alien to the genre. In my analysis, I use the terms emotion and affect synonymously.

The Affective Method of Detection

The hard-boiled detective functions as a catalyst. Given the nature of his job, wherever he goes his presence makes people react. What Dashiell Hammett's Sam Spade says applies to this subgenre: 'my way of learning is to heave a wild and unpredictable monkey-wrench into the machinery'.[11] This method of stirring things up aims to make others react emotionally. Because emotional responses begin automatically, they have value for detection. A suspect may, for example, blush, stammer, or swoon in the grip of agitation. By observing emotional reactions, detectives may use them as clues.

In *The Big Sleep* Marlowe provokes suspects in order to get a better handle on his investigation. A look at a representative scene elucidates this strategy. Marlowe is with a small-time grafter, Joe Brody, who is embroiled in the case. Brody has Marlowe at gun point, while Marlowe threatens Brody with turning him in for a murder.

> [Brody's] brown face was as hard as a piece of carved wood. 'You take chances, mister. It's kind of goddamned lucky for you I *didn't* bop Geiger.' 'You can step off for it just the same,' I told him cheerfully. […] Brody's voice went rough. "Think you got me framed for it?" […] 'There's somebody who'll tell it that way. I told you there was a witness.' […] He exploded then. 'That goddamned little hot pants!] he shouted. […] I leaned back and grinned at him. 'Swell. I thought you had those nude photos of her.'[12]

Although Brody has the upper hand, Marlowe hides any fear he may feel beneath a cheery façade. Habitually, characters try to keep their emotional reactions in check so as not to give anything away. Controlling reactions is possible to a degree, as also is feigning them by, for example, altering one's facial expressions. Marlowe's strategy relies on up-ending attempts to mask emotions by throwing the opponent off-guard so that he can get a genuine reaction. In the present example, he achieves this by accusing Brody of murdering a man and lying about having a witness. He can measure his success by observing the other's bodily reactions. Thus, he sees how Brody's forced nonchalance changes into worry, until anger gets the better of him. Marlowe regards this heated response as proof that he

has come to the correct conclusions about Brody's actions. Affective body language also demonstrates the power shift in this scene: Marlowe automatically relaxes, grinning to show that he is on top.

Body language can be used as a key to reading emotions that may then serve as clues. This explains why hard-boiled narratives dwell on tracing eye movements, facial expressions, gestures, and other involuntary actions. Emotional reactions enable both detectives and readers to fill in narrative gaps by supplying them with information about the case. The scene with Brody illustrates how filling in these gaps is linked to suspense, for inciting emotions also leads to danger. For example, the power play shifts once again when the client's daughter busts in, touting and firing a gun. Here suspense is combined with surprise, as Marlowe could not have expected his earlier insinuations to have this effect on her. What is noteworthy is the seamless interplay the affective method of detection requires between body language and cognition: the detective must keenly observe the suspects' emotional reactions and be able to name and appraise them fast if he is to master threatening situations. Given that the detective serves as a model reader, whose reading strategies readers both observe and emulate,[13] readers too are engaged in a similar interplay. Immersed in the suspenseful and curiosity-provoking events, they are gripped by powerful emotions, but they must quickly reflect on those emotions if they are to keep up with the progress of the investigation. To be sure, detectives and readers are guided by generic conventions, which facilitates reflection on emotions: typically, they can be classified among the core emotions of anger, fear, disgust, contempt, surprise, and sadness. Also, the predominant social emotions of shame, embarrassment, envy, hatred, and guilt belong to this list.[14] Consequently, the genre relies heavily on what may be characterized as stock emotions.

The unforeseen consequences of this affective method include its possible effect on the detective. The murder of the small-time hustler Harry Jones in chapter 26 provides a good example. The unarmed Marlowe hears the encounter between a gangster's henchman and Jones through a door crack. His reactions are heightened by the fact that he can only listen to what is happening: his body is tense and he hardly dares to breathe. The realization that his casual question about Jones is the cause of this situation intensifies his remorse: he feels vulnerable, deeply frustrated, regretful, and sad. This emotional reaction is heightened by Jones's protection of his girlfriend who, in Marlowe's estimation, does not deserve such chivalry. The scene ends with Marlowe out on the street: 'When one of [the rain drops] touched my tongue I knew that my mouth was open and the ache at the side of my jaws told me it was open wide and strained back, mimicking the rictus of death carved upon the face of Harry Jones'.[15] Marlowe empathizes with Jones to the point of identification, a fact that later influences his actions when he kills the henchman – in self-defence, but also to revenge Jones's death. This scene exemplifies the kind of sympathy and compassion that Robinson holds central to any reader's emotional understanding of characters and their situations. In a similar manner to Marlowe, readers dwell on Jones's condition, saddened by the perception of his predicament. As Robinson points out, readers do not necessarily identify with a character, but they imaginatively reconstruct what the other person is undergoing. In this particular scene, readers feel compassion for both Marlowe and Jones, actively involving themselves in their respective situations.

This affective and imaginative adoption of another's perspective as part of the investigative method has already been described by Edgar Allan Poe's C. Auguste Dupin, who explains that 'when I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid […] is any one […] I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, as if to match or correspond with the expression'.[16] The aim is to fathom what thoughts and feelings arise in the detective's mind and heart. This method relies on the detective's feeling into the opponent's mind and emotions by treating his own mind and emotions as other and probing into the ensuing reactions. It is thus based on the detective's cognitive and emotional doubling of the criminal. The approach postulates a basic likeness between the detective and the quarry as a condition for knowledge.[17] Thus, using emotions as an investigative tool involves the kind of transferential approach familiar from psychoanalysis, in which

the detective gauges his own emotional reactions as clues to the suspects' emotions and their significance. What characterizes detective fiction, however, is that detectives frequently resort to what Karl Morrison calls malevolent sympathy, a condition and means of assimilation based on suspicion, strife, and even hatred.[18] Consequently, they may manipulate their emotional dexterity and their conclusions about suspects' emotions *against* these suspects, if it furthers the investigation – or a personal goal.

While detectives typically use the affective and imaginative method to identify with the criminal, Marlowe employs it in order to feel himself into the *victim*, a tactic that puts him in a vulnerable position. In *The Big Sleep* this strategy changes the detective's emotional investment in his job; it also affects the readers' emotional investment in Marlowe, who, as the protagonist-narrator, enlists their empathy.

The Sternwood Case as Marlowe's Emotional Education

The significance of the affective method for Marlowe's investigation emerges as early as the first chapter, in which General Sternwood commissions him to sort out a blackmail attempt by A. G. Geiger based on his daughter Carmen's gambling debts. This assignment is perplexing, because it fits a lawyer better than a private detective. Paying attention not only to his client's speech but also to his comportment, gestures, and tone of voice Marlowe notices that the client is disappointed in his two daughters, but very fond of Rusty Regan, the son-in-law who has abruptly left his marriage. Afterwards Vivian Regan tries to find out whether Marlowe was hired to find her husband, thus reinforcing Marlowe's hunch that the client wants to ensure that Regan is not behind the blackmail. Thus, from the start there is a disjunction between what Marlowe is told about his assignment and what he feels he is asked to do. Deciphering the unspoken emotions of his client, he infers that the blackmail nests a more important missing person case. Although he investigates the blackmail, it is the case of the missing man that touches him emotionally, because he recognizes in the General and Regan characteristics of the chivalric ideal he cherishes: honor, bravery, commitment. This brand of chivalry adheres to a sentimental, paternalistic romanticism.[19]

Marlowe's investigation in *The Big Sleep* has an ouroboric form, insofar as he is set the problem of the missing person in the Sternwood mansion and resolves it in the same place. The formal elegance of his narrative suggests that this case serves as a life-changer for Marlowe: it transforms his outlook on his profession. In Robinson's terms, it provides him with an emotional education, requiring of him that he reflect back on the whole emotional process of solving the case, including his physiological responses, affective appraisals, and actions. This education targets his chivalric ideals as the basis of his job. On first entering the mansion, he sees a glass-window scene of a knight standing by a damsel in distress. The knight's ineptitude frustrates Marlowe who thinks he should intervene to ensure the girl's rescue. Then Carmen accosts him, falling straight into his arms. On reentering the mansion five days later, he observes that 'the knight in the stained-glass window still wasn't getting anywhere untying the naked damsel from the tree'.[20] Now he knows that Carmen, although in need of help, is no damsel; instead, she is an epileptic, a drug addict, a porn model, a nymphomaniac, and a killer to boot. Marlowe need not have looked further than at the girl in his arms for the answer.

Marlowe solves the blackmail early (ch. 18), and the case he was hired to handle is over. From this moment, his emotional investment in General Sternwood and Rusty Regan steers his actions, widening the discrepancy between his paid assignment and the self-imposed one. Marlowe's emotional education can be divided into three phases: clearing the blackmail case (chs 1-19), tracing its links to the missing Regan case (chs 20-29), and proving how these two cases intertwine, which serves as the solution (chs 30-32). There is an emotional turning point half-way through: returning home, Marlowe finds Carmen lying naked in his bed (ch. 24). This scene is decisive and he immediately reflects on its meaning. At first he observes that '[t]here was a problem laid out on the

[chess]board… I reached down and moved a knight', but a little later on, he concedes that '[t]he move with the knight was wrong […] Knights had no meaning in this game. It wasn't a game for knights'.[21] Once he has thrown Carmen out, he tears 'the bed to pieces savagely'.[22] His narrative attempts to come to terms with this forceful emotional realization – the values he cherishes do not apply in his world. Given Marlowe's character as 'a man of honor', and 'the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world',[23] readers become emotionally invested in his dilemma of acting uprightly in a society that neither recognizes nor appreciates such conduct. Following Robinson, if readers do not perceive the emotional conflict of Marlowe's ethical quandary, they will neither fully understand his situation nor his attempts to navigate it. But simultaneously, the chivalric ideals and the emotions Marlowe invests in them generate room for reflection. Why does he commit himself emotionally to just these values? How does this commitment steer his actions and serve his wants, goals, and interests? Are these values commendable in themselves and do they suit the context in which he is working? Although readers aempathize with Marlowe, his emotional investment in chivalric values invites scrutiny and even disagreement.

Marlowe identifies with Regan to the point of taking the missing man's place as proxy; once he has inserted himself in Regan's place, he realizes that he is the same type of affective object for Carmen as the other man was. Given their supposedly shared values, Marlowe concludes that his disgust at Carmen's attempted seduction mirrors Regan's repulsion in a similar situation. Marlowe conjectures that Regan nevertheless acted in a chivalric manner toward Carmen, when she asked him to teach her to shoot. To prove this inference, he stages a replay of the events that ended Regan's life. Further, emotional identification helps Marlowe to enter into the backstory of the crime, consisting of a love triangle between Regan and the gangster Eddie Mars, both of whom are in love with the same woman, Mona. When Marlowe encounters Mona Mars, he too finds her charming. Consequently, affective identification guides Marlowe's assessment of who the villain is: not the deranged Carmen but the calculating Eddie Mars. What Marlowe sees as most damning about Mars is his business-like approach to people and things. The gangster does not let emotions sway him; he even cooks up a story about Mona having run away with his rival Regan, because it furthers his ends.

In their last meeting, the General voices displeasure at Marlowe's assumption of his ulterior motives (ch. 30). The General insists that he did not ask the detective to look for Regan, while Marlowe claims that that was exactly what the client wanted. This meeting consists of Marlowe's forceful persuasion of the General to accept Marlowe's interpretation: he provides a long justification for his assessment of the General's intention. As he goes on, he keeps observing the General's expressions that change from stiffness and coldness to acceptance. These changes allow Marlowe to gauge the success of his persuasion. It appeals to the client's pride, honor, judgment of character, and fondness of male camaraderie. He even interrupts the client, observing that the latter cares more about pride and male bonding than his daughters or money.[24] Thus, Marlowe identifies and names the General's emotions for him – especially the other's fears and wishes. This last meeting amounts to a replay of the affective relationship Marlowe thinks the client shared with Regan. When the General finally asks Marlowe to find Regan, he accepts the detective's interpretation.

As the case closes, Marlowe acts like a rescuer, unlike the knight who never saves the damsel: he demands that Carmen get treatment and frees the Sternwood sisters from Eddie Mars's clutches. Yet the mismatch between the blackmail story and the story of the missing man persists. Mars orchestrated the blackmail, but the climax – the confrontation between villain and detective – takes place in an unspecified future outside the narrative. The revelation about Regan's fate forms another let-down. Not only is Regan dead but his death is meaningless both for the killer, the detective, and society. Carmen gets revenge but does not understand the gravity of her deed. Marlowe cannot idealize Regan's death, because falling victim to Carmen shows a lack of caution and misevaluation of character. Finally, this death has no social impact and will perhaps never be solved.

The denouement's inconclusiveness is compounded by clues that Marlowe has misconstrued the emotional dimension of the case. His assessment of the suspects' character, motives, and goals

appears inaccurate, even erroneous. Such misreading implies that what Pierre Bayard identifies as delusional thinking permeates Marlowe's understanding of the case. Delusional thinking constructs a falsified relation to reality, because the thinker does not see things for what they are; instead, he tries to impose his convictions on reality. Therefore, it involves both a distortion of reality and a psychological position in relation to this distortion.[25] Delusional thinking is apparent in Marlowe's bending of the facts and the way in which he connects them together so that they fit his formulation of the solution. It has the appearance of adhering to acceptable relations of causality and coherence, but is betrayed by its rigidity and its intimate ties with the unconscious. Delusional thinking rises from the unconscious, because it serves the thinker's psychic needs[26] – and these needs are primarily emotional.

What alerts readers to Marlowe's delusional thinking is his presentation of affective relationships. Carmen is the hub of the case. He portrays her libidinal force as instinctual animality, beyond the ken of humanity. Further, the case involves impassioned relationships, leading to murders of revenge: in love with Carmen, the Sternwood chauffeur Brody murders Geiger for taking advantage of her. Mistaking Brody for Geiger's murderer, Geiger's lover Carol Lundgren shoots Brody. Marlowe, however, holds these relationships to be perverted or self-serving. Further, Marlowe characterizes Mona's love for her gangster husband as inexplicable, when men such as Regan and he are available. He questions the genuineness of these characters' feelings, downplaying the emotional commitment they demonstrate. Hence, his chivalric ideals make him abhor actual love relationships, which are distasteful, as they involve complex and contradictory corporeal affects, making agents act irrationally.

Marlowe's delusional thinking becomes most apparent in his misevaluation of the two men he admires. Handling this case tarnishes him ethically and damages him emotionally, for he does not act according to chivalric ideals: he kills a man and his actions cause the death of another. Most importantly, he deems it charitable not to reveal to the General that Carmen killed Regan, because he wants to preserve the client's honor and pride. He reasons that were the General to learn the truth, he would report Carmen to the police and die deeply disappointed in his children. Yet nothing indicates that parenthood is meaningful for Sternwood. He is a callous businessman, and not even a soldier; it was his father who was. As for Regan, he is an ex-IRA soldier but the battles he fought have nothing to do with chivalry. He was also a bootlegger who fell in love with a night-club singer, competing over her with a gangster. When he lost, he married on the rebound. The General and Regan are passionate, ruthless, and reckless in love and other matters. Thus, it escapes Marlowe that they are more like Carmen than knights. They have vitality, fervor, and brutality to a degree that is alien to the detective. Therefore, it is uncertain whether the General sees his attachment to Regan in the same manner as Marlowe does. Yet Marlowe insists that his version is correct. Gill Plain characterizes his agenda as one of searching for an ideal man 'to set in the balance against the void of corruption and despair, and as a lover with whom he might form an idealized homosocial union, located not in the tarnished present'.[27] This male double serves as the impossible object of the detective's desire.[28] This emotional fixation thus explains why Marlowe separates chivalry from telling the truth – the elusive ideal would not survive its disclosure.

Handling the Sternwood case provides Marlowe with an emotional education that centers on death. The fact that Regan is dead and the General's death is imminent resonates with his concern that his cherished ideals will soon be obsolete. The emotional role chivalric values play and the decisions Marlowe makes on their basis invite readers to reflect on whether they are justified. Therefore, they are engaged in reflecting on complex emotions. Before discussing this fact, however, it is necessary to consider Marlowe as narrator, for it is in this role that he articulates the lessons he has learned.

Narrating Melancholia

Jonathan Flatley explains that it is the readers' projection of the narrator as a person that makes emotion emerge.[29] Such projection creates the sense of communication that the silent text lacks as well as providing a space for shared emotions.[30] Retrospective narration allows Marlowe to bring emotions into the conscious sphere. In reviewing past events, he relives them as if they were present, giving them verbal expression. Flatley claims that the first-person narrator relies on two kinds of memory in narrating emotions: a mimetic, repetitive kind and a conscious, narrative one. Their interplay enables the narrator's cognitive evaluation of his emotional experience. When dealing with gripping past events, the narrator constructs a mimetic relation to someone in the present. The presence of a real or a projected interlocutor strengthens the narrator's trust in the realness of affects; further, the narrator is able to relive emotions by projecting someone else as also experiencing them.[31] This configuration opens a space for the narrative audience, that is, the recipient the narrator envisions as receiving his narrative in the optimal manner. The narrator's cognitive evaluation of emotions takes place whenever he recounts an affective experience he has had but that he is reviewing from a new vantage point. Although they use different terminology, Flatley[32] and Robinson[33] agree that during such instants the narrative audience learns about the role and significance of emotions for the narrator.

Marlowe's narration is framed by 'a look of hard wet rain';[34] and indeed, it is mostly either raining or is about to rain. Fredric Jameson claims that meteorological rhythms provide the mood for Marlowe's narration.[35] Such an evocation of mood signals a state of readiness for certain emotions. Flatley explains that moods provide narrators with ways of articulating their connections to their socio-historical context, because moods provide culturally accepted shapes and structures into which narrators may channel their emotions.[36] The constant evocation of (the threat of) rain in Marlowe's narration underlines the ominous and depressing mood in which his handling of the case takes place. It enables the narrative audience to catch on to the sense of mistrust, hostility, and fear of others impregnating this world. This mood refers to an all-pervading isolation in which there are no longer any forms of shared experience. As Jameson says, only Marlowe's narration fits characters together as parts of the same puzzle.[37]

This dark mood frames Marlowe's narration of emotional episodes, that is, of events and experiences that evoked his affects. He repeatedly builds an episode by underlining its end as a transformation of its beginning. The scene in chapter 28 with Silver-Wig (aka Mona Mars) provides a representative example. It evokes the glass window image of the knight and the damsel, but turns it upside down, for it begins with Marlowe 'trussed like a turkey ready for the oven'.[38] His narration records sound, sight, and corporeal sensations, thus reflecting his utter helplessness. Such reporting is comparable to the portentous music of suspenseful film scenes: 'overhead the rain still pounded, with a remote sound, as if it was somebody else's rain'; Mona's voice has 'a tiny tinkle in it, like bells in a doll's house',[39] while the alarming sounds turn out to be 'only the rain drifting against the walls'.[40] Against this ominous background, the narration lingers over Mona's attractiveness, which is expressed in a series of similes that provide the means for reflecting on the emotions she evokes. Mona has eyes like 'the blue of mountain lakes'[41] and breath 'as delicate as the eyes of a fawn', but is also characterized as 'tall rather than short, but no bean-pole', with a hand that is 'not the usual bony garden tool'.[42] The narrator mixes idealizing similes with humorous ones, thus self-consciously pondering her charm. Reporting the sensations and similes underlines Marlowe's role as a hard-boiled detective, but it is "the damsel" who frees him.

Going out, he pins her to the wall by pressing his body against hers:

> 'All this was arranged in advance, rehearsed to the last detail, timed to the split second. Just like a radio programme. No hurry at all. Kiss me, Silver-Wig.'
> Her face under my mouth was like ice. […] Her lips were like ice, too.
> I went out through the door and it closed behind me, without sound, and the rain blew in under the porch, not as cold as her lips.[43]

The narrator-Marlowe dramatizes what he felt. By referencing the script of a radio program, he alludes to the typical situations in which an investigator lands. His narration portrays him as if he were a knight going to battle, kissing his lady for the last time. The repetition of the coldness of Mona's face and lips, related to the slanting rain, create a self-conscious rhythm, the purpose of which is to convey his bodily response to, and heroic face-off with, danger. Yet this account contradicts what has actually taken place: he was in a highly vulnerable position and would have died without a woman's help. Despite self-mockery, the narrator's formulation of the emotional lesson of this scene highlights his bravery, toughness, and chivalry. Narration enables him to foster delusional thinking, strengthening his falsified relation to reality. Consequently, narration serves as a further way for him to sustain an idealization of his role and performance.

In further reflecting on the emotional functions of Marlowe's narration, it pays to look at how he recounts his reactions after handling life-threatening situations. After shooting the henchman Canino, he reports that he began to 'laugh like a loon';[44] similarly, when Carmen fires at him, he relates that he laughed and grinned at her.[45] There are no wise-cracking embellishments, but simple statements of facts. Not only does this reaction speak of relief but also of triumph: he has survived, while the missing man whose steps he has been tracing has perished. He is still here, among the living, while his double is there, among the dead. This realization forms the gist of his emotional education, one on which he muses at the conclusion of his narrative:

> What did it matter where you lay once you were dead? … You just slept the big sleep, not caring about the nastiness of how you died or where you fell. Me, I was part of the nastiness now. Far more part of it than Rusty Regan was. But the old man didn't have to be.
> On the way downtown I stopped at a bar and had a couple of double Scotches. They didn't do me any good. All they did was make me think of Silver-Wig, and I never saw her again.[46]

Marlowe's narrative ends in an elegiac tone. When relating the narrator's brash voice in the beginning to his resigned and chastened tone at the end, the narrative audience recognizes the narrator's mood as melancholic. He longs for lost ideals, broods over the tawdriness of the events and contemplates the irrationality of the persons involved – including himself. In interpreting this lesson, the narrative audience has to consider the whole narrative in order to capture its emotional impact. Given the compassion readers feel for the narrator, they perceive this plaint for the dead as also a plaint for the inevitability of the narrator's – and their own – death, saturated with feelings of impotence, inadequacy, and spiritual emptiness. It is death as the radical annihilation of self that poses the narrator's greatest fear and his narrative serves as an attempt to symbolize this dread.[47]

The Narrator's Emotional Conclusion

I now return to the discrepancy between the official case and Marlowe's emotional entanglement that persists in the ending – and even beyond. This situation supports Bayard's claim that the solution provides textual closure signaling material closure but is not necessarily matched with subjective closure.[48] The reason for this state of affairs is that Marlowe actually has two different cases to solve: the Sternwood case and an existential one. The former generates the latter, but the latter is what his narrative is really about. It is about a modern man's place in a world filled with violence and, given the nature of his job, this man's relationship to death and the dead.

As we have seen, the protagonist-narrator's delusional thinking reveals an obsession with his doubles. By replaying Regan's fate, Marlowe attempts to reinstate the kind of a personal, reciprocal, and concrete bond between the living and the dead that existed in pre-modern societies. Modernity altered our relationship to death by turning what was formerly understood as a relation of symbolic exchange into one of biological and medical fact. Marlowe's effort centers on investing death with

symbolic meaning which is achieved through an exchange between parties. The living celebrate the dead with rituals, while the dead acknowledge that gift by their presence in the midst of life, thus suggesting a fluidity between life and death. Death is a continuation of life, not its definitive end.[49] The detective's identification with the male victim together with his elegiac, commemorative narrative represents an attempt to establish such a bond of mutuality. Marlowe's narrative is his gift to his double, from whom he hopes to receive an understanding of what it means to be dead.[50] Consequently, the narrator maps an affective experience of encountering death that alleviates the anxiety it causes. By insisting that death retains meaningfulness thanks to its vital links with life, the narrator enables the narrative audience to transform melancholia into hope Significantly, his narration constructs a pattern around this theme in all of his stories except *Playback*.

Thus, melancholia does not incapacitate Marlowe as he goes on to investigate and narrate six more cases. Flatley argues that melancholia may function as the emotional mechanism that enables one to be interested in the world.[51] As a practice, it produces emotional knowledge, expressed in what Flatley calls an affective map that converts depression into a strategy of engaging with the world. An affective map addresses the emotional values attached to the structures constituting our social worlds. Thus, analyzing affective maps shows how these structures shape our lives and our relationship to ourselves through emotions.[52] In my understanding, as a narrator Marlowe summarizes his emotional education in an affective map that provides him with this new type of vital connection to the world. It helps him to be clear about the losses at the root of his grief as well as whom and what to blame for them: the fragmentation of society with people living in isolation, the objectification of human relationships, the dissolution of gender roles, and the corruption of social values. As a narrator he associates all these losses with death – the death of human connection and of ideals. Flatley states that an affective map allows a melancholic to recognize those with whom he shares this depressive condition.[53] In Marlowe's case, however, there is no such collective; instead, he attempts to turn his *narrative audience* into a community of melancholics for whom the depressive affective experience is converted through his self-conscious wise-cracking, and stylized narration into a source of connection, even pleasure. Marlowe's emotional education transforms his way of being in the world, and he narrates in order to impress this change on his narrative audience.

In reviewing the affective map that Marlowe's narration produces, the narrative audience may identify a concern with death as a key conflict of modernity. Familiar from anyone's life world, this issue calls for emotional reflection. This 'case', however, remains unsolvable. The closest Marlowe comes to experiencing death is during states of unconsciousness. Yet as he cannot remember anything from these states, he cannot narrate them. They are telling lacunae in his narrative, as being unconscious and being dead remain unnarratable mysteries. He nevertheless repeatedly returns to life from these states of unconsciousness. Thus, these lacunae serve as pointers to the narrator's delusional thinking, suggesting that ultimately *The Big Sleep* portrays its narrator's hopeful fantasy of death as the guarantor of life's meaning as well as a continuation of that life.

Detective criticism, according to Bayard, works out solutions that are more satisfying to the soul.[54] In light of my examination, I would amend his formulation by saying that this approach works out problems that are more satisfactory and truer to what actually happens in the text than the problems the detective openly formulates. My analysis shows that within Marlowe's apparent problem about the missing Rusty Regan is nested the much more vexing problem about death and being dead. Thus, as Bayard observes, detective criticism is interventionism: it intervenes in an active way, refusing to go along. It boldly looks for the true problem.[55]

Textual closure is material closure, but not necessarily subjective closure Every reader fills in textual gaps. All literary worlds are incomplete.[56] Readers complete texts in differing ways. As I have shown, reading *The Big Sleep* provides readers with a suspenseful experience, making their palms sweat and stomach contract. But this experience exceeds mere thrills, thanks to the complex manner in which the hard-boiled narrative investigates the emotions its true problem evokes. Further, these emotions cannot be expressed in folk psychological or stock emotional terms. This novel thus

provides readers with a demanding emotional challenge, one that genuinely contributes to their becoming more perceptive and astute in their understanding of human affairs.

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[1] Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep* (London: Penguin, n.d. E-book), 1.
[2] Dennis Porter, *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 108.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Martin Priestman, *Detective Fiction and Literature: The Figure on the Carpet* (London: MacMillan, 1990), 48, 50-51.
[5] See, for example, Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music, and Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005),
[6] Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 171.
[7] Robinson, *Deeper than Reason*, loc. 106, 796, 798, 1185-87, 1192.
[8] Ibid., loc. 787-789, 1017.
[9] Ibid., loc. 1872-1875.
[10] Ibid., loc. 1990.
[11] Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (New York: Vintage Crime/Black lizard; Random House, N.d. E-book), 86.
[12] Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 59-60.
[13] See, for example, Peter Hühn, "The Detective as Reader: Narrativity and Reading Concepts in Detective Fiction," *Modern Fiction Studies* 33, no. 3 (1987): 451-466.
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[15] Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 133.
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[20] Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 155.
[21] Ibid., 113, 115-116.
[22] Ibid., 117.
[23] Raymond Chandler, *The Simple Art of Murder* (New York: Ballantine, 1972), 20.
[24] Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 158.
[25] Pierre Bayard, *Sherlock Holmes Was Wrong: Reopening the Case of the Hound of the Baskervilles* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), 85-87.
[26] Ibid., 89-91.
[27] Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, 65.
[28] Ibid., 67.
[29] Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), loc. 1249-1254.
[30] Ibid., loc. 1263-1267, 1252-1256.
[31] Ibid., loc. 763, 769, 776.
[32] Ibid., loc. 1137.
[33] Robinson, *Deeper than Reason*, loc. 2291-2298, 3401.
[34] Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 1.
[35] Fredric Jameson, *Raymond Chandler: The Detections of Totality* (London: Verso, 2016), loc. 1194.
[36] Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, loc. 266, 272-274, 289, 310.
[37] Jameson, *Raymond Chandler*, loc. 126, 190.
[38] Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, 141.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 143.
[41] Ibid., 141.
[42] Ibid., 142.
[43] Ibid., 147.
[44] Ibid., 150.
[45] Ibid., 163.
[46] Ibid., 171.
[47] Pyrhönen, *Mayhem and Murder*, 248-250.
[48] Bayard, *Sherlock Holmes Was Wrong*, 104.
[49] Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchanges with Death* (London: Sage, 1993), 131-132, 140-142.
[50] Pyrhönen, *Mayhem and Murder*, 252.
[51] Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, loc. 34.

[52] Ibid., loc. 32-34, 65, 1107-1111.
[53] Ibid., loc. 64-67.
[54] Pierre Bayard, *Who Killed Roger Ackroyd? The Mystery behind the Agatha Christie Mystery* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 57.
[55] Bayard, *Sherlock Holmes Was Wrong*, 59.
[56] Ibid., 105.